

24. (new) The tyre of claim 23, wherein the inner central blocks are approximately semiparabolic-shaped.

25. (new) A high-performance tyre for a motor vehicle, comprising a tread comprising first and second circumferential grooves, wherein the circumferential grooves separate a central region from two lateral shoulder regions, wherein the central region comprises central blocks, and wherein the shoulder regions comprise shoulder blocks;

wherein the shoulder blocks in each lateral shoulder region are separated from each other by transverse grooves, and wherein the shoulder blocks in each lateral shoulder region are joined at one end by a continuous track forming a continuous lateral wall of the respective circumferential groove;

wherein each of the circumferential grooves is adjacent, on a side further from the central region, to a respective continuous track from which branch transverse grooves delimiting respective shoulder blocks, wherein each continuous track terminates in a continuous lateral wall of the respective circumferential groove, and wherein the continuous lateral wall of at least one circumferential groove has a profile, in a radial plane, which is inclined more, with respect to a centerline axis of the respective circumferential groove, than a profile of a facing lateral wall of the respective circumferential groove; and

wherein the central blocks are separated from each other by transverse grooves having a bottom wall with a shaped profile of variable depth.--

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#### REMARKS

Applicant submits this Preliminary Amendment together with a patent application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b).


In this Preliminary Amendment, Applicant adds section headings, section subheadings, and an Abstract of the Disclosure to conform to U.S. practice. Additionally, Applicant adds claims to the right of priority and benefit. Further, Applicant cancels, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 2-15, and adds new claims 16-25, which include the same subject matter as the original claims, to improve clarity. The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to the specification and the addition of new claims 16-25. No new matter was introduced.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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**APPENDIX TO PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT DATED DECEMBER 28, 2001**

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please amend the paragraph at page 4, lines 3-6, as follows:

[In a further aspect] Moreover, the invention [relates to methods and tyres which] makes it possible to control certain design characteristics of a tyre, such as the possibility of optimizing the flow and consequent distribution of the tread compound along the crown of the tyre.

Please amend the paragraph at page 4, lines 7-13, as follows:

[In a further aspect] Therefore, the invention [relates to methods and tyres which] makes it possible to control certain behaviour characteristics of a tyre, particularly a high-performance tyre, such as the possibility of controlling the wear degree and rate of the tread band in use, as well as the roadholding in both dry and wet conditions, the plastic comfort and/or quietness of running in severe conditions of use at high running speeds.

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